

THE QUAVER,

WITH WHICH IS PUBLISHED "CHORAL HARMONY,"

A monthly Advocate of Popular Musical Education,
And Exponent of the Letter-note Method.

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[One Penny.]

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An easy System which
TRAINS TO SING AT SIGHT
FROM THE ORDINARY NOTES.

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2. That the STAFF-NOTATION, taking it all round, is the BEST yet invented, affording peculiar advantages to the PLAYER, and also to the SIGHT-SINGER who understands his work.

3. That the best systems of sight-singing are those founded upon the TONIC DO principle, because the KEY is a mere accident, but the SCALE is the TUNE, and it is by the relation which the sounds bear to the Tonic and to each other (not by their pitch upon the Stave) that the Vocalist sings.

4. That the easiest possible mode of teaching on this principle is that termed LETTER-NOTE, which appends the Sol-fa initials to the ordinary notes, and either withdraws the letters gradually, or otherwise trains the pupil to dispense with their aid.

5. That Letter-note provides the most direct INTRODUCTION possible to the staff notation, because the Pupil is trained from the OUTSET by means of the symbols employed in that notation.

6. That Letter-note, while it is legible by every Player, gives the Singer all the AID derivable from a specially contrived notation.

7. That the assistance of Letter-note in learning to sing is as LEGITIMATE and ADVANTAGEOUS as the "fingering" printed for the use of the Pupil-pianist.

8. That, although the habitual use of Letter-note is quite unnecessary to the matured Sight-singer, it increases the reading power of the YOUTHFUL and the UNSKILLED, enabling them to attain an early familiarity with a better class of music, and thus cultivating a higher musical taste.



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Music in Rural Parish Churches.

IT may not be out of place to say a few words about the musical services in our country churches, especially in those districts which are known to be centres of attraction for jaded town-workers. For it must be admitted by all of us that when, in response to the peal of the bells or pretty chiming, we wend our way along the well-kept and neat churchyard into the old portals of God's house, a misgiving has often crossed our minds as to the musical character of the service in which we are about to take part. Will the music be simple and good? Will it assist us in mental and spiritual consecration? or will it first impose silence on us, and then goad us into a state of nervous irritation which will make all further efforts at divine worship impossible? Musical services of ideal excellence are but rarely to be found, notwithstanding the large amount of talk on the subject at some of our Church Congresses. No wonder that little practical good has been wrought in this direction, even when thoroughly thoughtful papers have been read, by earnest, practical musicians and clergy, for it almost invariably happens that as soon as the discussion on the paper commences some unlucky epithet is attached to the word "Gregorian" by a champion of Anglican music, or a similar expression is hurled at Anglicanism by a champion of Gregorian music. Instantly, the two factions rush into a wordy conflict, and become as deaf to the appeals of common sense as an armed mob in a street row. If only we could agree to differ on this question, or, better still, could make the use of the words Gregorian and Anglican punishable by a heavy fine, some good might yet be done at future congresses. Experience proves without doubt that pure unison singing never can and never will be adopted for parochial purposes. Providence has given mankind, roughly speaking, two broad divisions of voice, one high, the other low; women and boys are either trebles or altos; men, either tenors or bass. Those portions of unison music which lie comfortably in the range of the trebles and tenors are so uncomfortably high for the altos and basses,

that they cannot long sustain them in tune. When the music, on the other hand, suits the range of altos and basses, the other voices seem to have lost all brightness and beauty. It is no exaggeration to say that four-part singing is more truly *natural* than singing in unison. Of course there are certain melodies which nearly all persons can for a time join in, such, for example, some of the Gregorian tones for the Psalms; but even these will always prove very fatiguing to a large section of the congregation, and moreover it is a known fact that boys' voices are often permanently injured by much Gregorian chanting, owing probably to their efforts to recite always on a "chest" note. But fortunately we need not say much about the singing of the Psalms; this is as a rule not unsatisfactory, whether Gregorian or Anglican chants are used. The portions of a service which seem to bring out the weak points of a choir are the *Te Deum* and Nicene Creed. We have heard in a crowded church at a certain beautiful sea-side resort, the *Te Deum* sung to a sort of chant-service, which was nothing short of a rhythmical puzzle from beginning to end; and lamentable were the attempts of the congregation around us to fit in the words to the music by force or stratagem. At another church in the same neighbourhood, a very indifferent choir attacked a most dramatic and difficult setting of the Nicene Creed with such disastrous results that the large congregation seemed dumb in amazement. At both these churches the congregation joined in the hymns with a vigour tempered by good taste which showed that a greater share of the music ought to have been placed within its reach. But it is unnecessary to give special cases. Those summer tourists who keep their ears open must have long ago observed that the great temptation and sin of our parish choirs is to be too ambitious. But in attempting to cope with this growing evil our clergy meet with two serious difficulties. If the music of a particular church is purposely kept down to a simple and easy level, some of the best voices in the choir are sure to secede and attach themselves to some other choir in which their individuality is not compulsorily merged in the common weal. This is one real practical difficulty; the other is no less

troublesome. If a choir heartily and willingly promise to deny themselves the pleasure of singing difficult music, can a good supply of simple but yet interesting music be found? Publishers' catalogues would tempt us to answer this question with a distinct affirmative; our summer holidays, however, generally send us home with a decided feeling that it should be answered in the negative. These two difficulties—(1) how to get rid of all unsuitable and ambitious music, (2) where to find good simple music to take its place—lie at the root of the generally unsatisfactory state of church music in our smaller towns and rural districts. The only remedy for the former is to impress choirmen in churches where a really congregational service is required with the true nature of the duties required of them: they are to be mere leaders of public worship, not prominent soloists: they are to help others and are not to exhibit themselves. The difficulty of finding good simple music is really serious; and it cannot be remedied by the popular prescription, "Sing everything in unison." Why should not our church composers receive encouragement to write strictly congregational settings of the Canticles, Nicene Creed, *Sanctus*, and *Gloria in Excelsis*? It would be a fatal mistake to form a mixed body of clergy and musicians into a society for encouraging such compositions; large funds would be required, and it is more than probable that many of our church composers would be rather shy of submitting their works to the patronage of such a body, but it would surely be a simple thing for Convocation to name a committee with power to stamp music as "issued under the sanction of the parochial musical committee." Such sanction would answer the double purpose of encouraging young men to compose music of the required type, because it would insure a large sale; also, it would be of immense assistance to the clergy, inasmuch as they would have a guaranteed source of supply. Publishers might be invited to send in any or all music they might think suitable, whether new or old. Happily, there are indeed many, very many, churches where admirable congregational services are to be found, and should it be supposed that unkind criticism of an indiscriminate character is here promulgated,

the object of these well-meant words will be quite misunderstood. What the writer feels, and feels strongly, is that many of our church choirs are struggling after a bad imitation of a cathedral service, when it is really quite in their power to establish and maintain a noble congregational worship; they are all of them working with zeal and perseverance, but in the vast majority of cases are they not working in a wrong direction?—*J.S. in The Guardian.*

Modesty in Connection with Music and its Sister Arts.

A MAN to become a successful art-worker must not only be gifted, but must also be of a strictly modest disposition; if this quality does not exist we may rely that the works from such an one who does not possess humility will be poor, and the good to be extracted therefrom small, if any. It is impossible for a man to hide his character in his works, however dexterous he may be in the art he follows. A poor musician (I mean in the sense of knowledge) can only produce poor music, and on the other hand an artist only good music. A beautiful musical composition is the outcome of a beautiful and modest intellectual imagination. You may read in works of art the true character of the artist, and more so in music than in its kindred arts. The musician to be able to work successfully must be of a modest mind, yet of a lofty and Christian character. He is not able to produce an "opus" without these good qualities. One may, with a certain amount of technical skill, be able to produce an effective statue or a good painting but to the musical composer there is something more than technicalities required; in fact, they can be largely dispensed with. The *soul* must be there, or there is no successful labour. The musician's technical skill (if I may be allowed to say so) is purely imaginative, and he cannot compose without this skilful imaginative genius; and how truly are the musician's works but mirrors of himself; how exactly he puts his character and disposition into his productions. If he is clever his music is equally so; if he is impatient his music is turbid, all his peculiarities, his likes and dislikes, his perseverance, his affections, all are in his works, and you may read his character to the very letter. If a man writes

music under the influence of love, his music is typical of love; if he is smarting under a fancy of disappointment, his music portrays loneliness; should he be passionate, his music is excited—he cannot hide himself from our gaze in his works. The art of music and its sister arts is the work of a whole spirit; if the spirit is modest the work is good; but if art is produced through a man of vicious habits it becomes a vice, though in itself a true virtue; but how often do virtues become vice through being misplaced. Lovely art is the outcome of virtue in a modest man, and so produces nothing but virtue in people who are worthy of its acceptance. The evil that emanates from art through one of its followers is from the man and not from the art. When we hear something in music which is most lovely, there seems to be—in fact, there is—a certain restraint upon our appreciation, and this restraint is the bad that is within us; every wrong seems to crowd upon us at the moment we become a spectator of, or a listener to a work of art, and keeps back that entire appreciation which we long for when observing a splendid picture or listening to a lovely symphony. It is the *good* that is within that helps forward our appreciation; in comparison to the amount of good or bad we are in possession of, we are able to lose or feel the essence of the beautiful in art. The true artist possesses neither arrogance nor pride, but modesty in all that he does. He never thinks that his work is completed; he criticises himself minutely, and so in nine cases out of ten his labour becomes crowned with success.

This modesty in good work *must* exist—this continual keeping oneself under. He who considers himself above his fellow art-workers, we may depend is no artist. The great charm in music is its modesty. Take any of the great composers—Mendelssohn, for example; who, while reading his life, is not struck with the superb and bashfulness that pervaded his existence? Hence his success. He was never satisfied with his works, and therefore continued in his striving. Yet how he succeeded!

I could not have chosen a more brilliant example. What man ever composed his own character so completely as Mendelssohn? Is not his modesty observable in most of his works—what continual soaring and striving!—his unegotistical character coming out in every beautiful phrase. How unlike this man is the modern aspirant, I am sorry to say; but what a splendid pattern he should be! Mendelssohn's work was purely unselfish, he worked only for the furtherance of art, and my reader (if he or she be a musician, or an admirer of music) will be able to form an accurate opinion as to whether he succeeded or not. How selfish we find art-followers are as a rule—this longing

to become a *somebody*—the craving for a spontaneous benefit of work completed. The serpent, with its deadly fang, in all art is *pride*, and until this is rooted out, aye, and not a vestige remaining, all progress in music, or any other art, is limited to a very small degree. There is a common feeling among the majority of the youthful aspirants to outvie each other in their respective avocations, and phrases not the most euphonious are showered down by them upon the heads of the public for their lack of admiration. "What bad taste!" thinks the young composer, "for the publisher not to accept my MSS." "What idiots the people are!" exclaims the young aspirant for the stage, "not to see my good acting." "Ignorant wretches!" the young artist exclaims, if the mob observe not the beauty (?) in his picture. "The people have no feeling—their hearts are as stone!" thinks the youthful orator after delivering an oration which he thinks perfection, but which does not seem to have moved the multitude. "There is not a shade of art in the world!" exclaims the youthful sculptor in despair—and such like epithets the youthful poet pours upon the listening crowd who fail to observe the "charming metaphor" (?) in his verse. This intellectual pride is greatly condemned in Holy Scripture; it is, as it were, a spot upon the mind's eye, which prevents it seeing the true light; it is a wound in the heart, which prevents it receiving knowledge. It has been observed, "In great seas and oceans some places are deeper than others, so the depth of humility indicates the abundance of knowledge." This pride of intellect leads eventually to the scorn of all that is good and holy, and drives away by degrees the appreciation of, and the desire for furthering all art. Greatness in art demands and receives that moral submissiveness that is made before it. Lucian, in one of his dialogues, relates the case of two men going into the theatre to play on the harp; one harp was covered with gold and jewels, but its strings broke, and the admiration of the listeners was changed to contempt; the harp of the other man was a very poor and common one, yet it gave out the sweetest sounds, and delighted everybody present. We are all ambitious to a certain extent—in fact, all people *should* be ambitious of the things that are good from a high motive; but this self-glorification is an immoderate desire for dignity and pre-eminence, and a source of present mortification as well as future punishment. He who wishes to work successfully at music, must be of a humble disposition; the deeper we lay the foundations of humility, the higher we shall be able to raise our art-structure. When we approach a monarch, we draw near with great humility and modesty; and so should we be when we approach these majestic arts. It is only in a

humble spirit that we can seek out their beauties; and so, permeated with the beautiful in art, we eke the charms out to the world in the same modest spirit through which we derived them. Art will not descend to us; we must ascend to it. —GEO. F. GROVER in *The Musical Standard*.

No. Music without Melody.

THE dictionary definition of melody applies as well to rhythm as to real melody; and that even to the unmusical intelligence it is unsatisfying, is evident from such expressions as "Our Melodious Whale," etc. The fact is that melody is not simply a succession of simple sounds, but is of too comprehensive a character to submit to such narrow boundaries, and in fact constitutes the charm of what is termed *harmony*. Take the following succession of simple sounds, the commencement of the familiar round "Three Blind Mice":—



The effect upon the ear is different in each case although the "succession of simple sounds" bag is identical. In the first and second examples, the point of repose on the final note is perfect, and they are the same in all respects except the progression of the lowest voice. But this slight change suffices to give a different colouring to the "simple succession." In the third, a slight variation in an interior voice makes a still greater change. Yet the point of repose is still well marked, although the key is entirely different and the collection of sounds, or chord, is in its most mobile condition. In the fourth example, the feeling of *motion* does not cease at the g, although the notes accompanying it are those of a chord of the nearest relation to the original key,

and the ear demands something further, for instance:—



Now the upper part, or "simple succession" is the same in each example. The lower, except in number two (in which the least change is apparent), is also identical. What then is the cause of the difference in the feelings excited by the same tones? A little thought will show that it is because the character of the tone *a* has been changed. In the first and second the ear accepts it as the second of the scale. In the third example the d-sharp gives notice that it is the fourth, and although in the fourth example we receive the same notice, it is a "false alarm," as by the resolution it is found to be really the sixth; and it is this *lie* that causes the feeling of unrest and the demand for something more satisfactory, as in number five.

It is evident that the influence that produces these different sensations is not the succession of single tones, but it is the product of the combination of the various tones. In other words, the melody is the product of the harmony.

It follows naturally that melody in its highest sense is simply an effect or an influence produced by a succession of sensations, and the demand of the ear for a key note (and an implied scale) is a most conclusive proof that the character of these sensations depends on the relation of the sounds producing them to that key note. A given sound may by its very relation to that key note, give notice that *following* sensations are to have their rise in its relation to an entirely different key or scale, or even that (as in the compound sound of the diminished seventh) that it has not yet made up its mind what it will decide upon.

It is this intangible influence of musical sounds that is the true melody, and I think the examples given show that it is produced far more by the *association* of those sounds and their mutual relations, than by any property of succession, and that the soul of the melody may reside equally as well in a well devised succession of chords, or compound sounds, as in one of simple ones. In example number six is given an instance of this active melodic motion rendering the most perfect and abominable discords of pleasing effect—a, b, c, c sharp, e flat,—striking the ear at the same instant, and even d *might* be added without rendering it displeasing.



It is evident, therefore, that in reality the effect of harmony, or a succession of compound sounds, is the same to the musical sense as that of a succession of simple ones, and as in the case of a simple succession of tones that fails in impressing the ear with a sensation of fitness and the intelligence with that of design, so a succession of compound sounds, or so called harmony, no matter how "coldly correct" it may be, that is void of the same qualities, is nothing but an unmeaning jangle, and cannot be dignified by the name of music. The life of music is melody, whether it be due to intervals arranged in the arpeggio form of simple succession, or in the simultaneous utterances of harmony.—J. WINCHELL FORBES in *The Musical People*.

The Use of the Voice.

TO whatever degree of perfection an instrumentalist may arrive, it will always be difficult for him to exercise over popular masses a power equal to that which results from the human voice, when directed by a proper sentiment, and perfected by proper studies. There is no need of giving proof of a great skill in the mechanical part, in order to excite lively and powerful emotions, by means of the voice; harmony, even, is not necessary; unison is sufficient. I shall refer, on this point, to one of the most astonishing effects which can be witnessed; it is that of four or five thousand children, belonging to the charitable institutions of London, who, on a particular day in each year, in St. Paul's cathedral, sing in unison, with simplicity and purity. The greatest musicians, and, among others, Haydn, have declared that the finest music which they have ever heard did not approach the prodigious effect which arises from the blending of these infantine voices in the most perfect unison that can be imagined.* There is

* Observe that this unison is perfect, precisely because there are so many voices; for, among them all, there is an attraction of sound, so that individual imperfections of tone are lost in the formation of one homogeneous sound.

something attractive and sympathetic in this effect; for persons whose sensibility is the least expansive have not been able to restrain their tears. To this example of the power of voices in unison, we may add others drawn from dramatic works. It is proper to remark, however, that these effects succeed only with large masses, and that, generally, harmony offers greater resources.

Choruses in a great number of parts were in use in the sixteenth century, particularly in Italy; at a later period, they thought of dividing these voices into several choirs of four parts each, and of placing in the large churches several organs to accompany these choirs; but, besides the difficulty of giving unity of execution to such complicated music, the effect obtained from it rarely corresponded with that which was anticipated. At length, it was perceived that well-written choruses of three or four really separate parts have more strength, exactness, and even harmony. The use of choruses in four parts has therefore generally prevailed. The kinds of voices which enter into their composition are the *soprano*, or upper; the *contralto*, or high counter; the *tenore* which in France was formerly called the *taille*; and the *basso*, or bass.

The part of the contralto was sung formerly in Italy by eunuchs, whose quality of voice has something penetrating in it which nothing else can furnish. But as the custom of mutilating men in order to make singers of them was never established in France, the place of the contralto has there been supplied by the high counter, a kind of voice which is scarcely met with, except in Languedoc, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Toulouse. The same cause has entirely banished from music both the eunuchs and the high counters; that cause is the French revolution, which, having put them in possession of Italy, abolished the barbarous practice of mutilation, and, having overthrown the government of the cathedrals, deprived the inhabitants of Languedoc of the musical instruction which they had been in the habit of receiving.

From the almost total disappearance of these useful kinds of voices, considerable embarrassment has arisen in the arrangement and execution of choruses. The experiment of supplying the place of eunuchs by the voices of women in contralto, has not been successful, because these voices fail in the low notes; and the employment of tenors to take the place of the high counters has not been more so, because the music written for the latter is found to be too high for the former. This double difficulty has determined several to write their choruses in four parts, for two female voices, *soprano* and *mezzo soprano*,

humble spirit that we can seek out their beauties; and so, permeated with the beautiful in art, we eke the charms out to the world in the same modest spirit through which we derived them. Art will not descend to us; we must ascend to it. —GEO. F. GROVER in *The Musical Standard*.

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It follows naturally that melody in its highest sense is simply an effect or an influence produced by a succession of sensations, and the demand of the ear for a key note (and an implied scale) is a most conclusive proof that the character of these sensations depends on the relation of the sounds producing them to that key note. A given sound may by its very relation to that key note, give notice that *following* sensations are to have their rise in its relation to an entirely different key or scale, or even that (as in the compound sound of the diminished seventh) that it has not yet made up its mind what it will decide upon.

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It is evident, therefore, that in reality the effect of harmony, or a succession of compound sounds, is the same to the musical sense as that of a succession of simple ones, and as in the case of a simple succession of tones that fails in impressing the ear with a sensation of fitness and the intelligence with that of design, so a succession of compound sounds, or so called harmony, no matter how "coldly correct" it may be, that is void of the same qualities, is nothing but an unmeaning jangle, and cannot be dignified by the name of music. The life of music is melody, whether it be due to intervals arranged in the arpeggio form of simple succession, or in the simultaneous utterances of harmony.—J. WINCHELL FORBES in *The Musical People*.

The Use of the Voice.

FO whatever degree of perfection an instrumentalist may arrive, it will always be difficult for him to exercise over popular masses a power equal to that which results from the human voice, when directed by a proper sentiment, and perfected by proper studies. There is no need of giving proof of a great skill in the mechanical part, in order to excite lively and powerful emotions, by means of the voice; harmony, even, is not necessary; unison is sufficient. I shall refer, on this point, to one of the most astonishing effects which can be witnessed; it is that of four or five thousand children, belonging to the charitable institutions of London, who, on a particular day in each year, in St. Paul's cathedral, sing in unison, with simplicity and purity. The greatest musicians, and, among others, Haydn, have declared that the finest music which they have ever heard did not approach the prodigious effect which arises from the blending of these infantine voices in the most perfect unison that can be imagined.* There is

* Observe that this unison is perfect, precisely because there are so many voices; for, among them all, there is an attraction of sound, so that individual imperfections of tone are lost in the formation of one homogeneous sound.

something attractive and sympathetic in this effect; for persons whose sensibility is the least expansive have not been able to restrain their tears. To this example of the power of voices in unison, we may add others drawn from dramatic works. It is proper to remark, however, that these effects succeed only with large masses, and that, generally, harmony offers greater resources.

Choruses in a great number of parts were in use in the sixteenth century, particularly in Italy; at a later period, they thought of dividing these voices into several choirs of four parts each, and of placing in the large churches several organs to accompany these choirs; but, besides the difficulty of giving unity of execution to such complicated music, the effect obtained from it rarely corresponded with that which was anticipated. At length, it was perceived that well-written choruses of three or four really separate parts have more strength, exactness, and even harmony. The use of choruses in four parts has therefore generally prevailed. The kinds of voices which enter into their composition are the *soprano*, or upper; the *contralto*, or high counter; the *tenore* which in France was formerly called the *taille*; and the *basso*, or bass.

The part of the *contralto* was sung formerly in Italy by eunuchs, whose quality of voice has something penetrating in it which nothing else can furnish. But as the custom of mutilating men in order to make singers of them was never established in France, the place of the *contralto* has there been supplied by the high counter, a kind of voice which is scarcely met with, except in Languedoc, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Toulouse. The same cause has entirely banished from music both the eunuchs and the high counters; that cause is the French revolution, which, having put them in possession of Italy, abolished the barbarous practice of mutilation, and, having overthrown the government of the cathedrals, deprived the inhabitants of Languedoc of the musical instruction which they had been in the habit of receiving.

From the almost total disappearance of these useful kinds of voices, considerable embarrassment has arisen in the arrangement and execution of choruses. The experiment of supplying the place of eunuchs by the voices of women in *contralto*, has not been successful, because these voices fail in the low notes; and the employment of tenors to take the place of the high counters has not been more so, because the music written for the latter is found to be too high for the former. This double difficulty has determined several to write their choruses in four parts, for two female voices, *soprano* and *mezzo soprano*,

tenor, and bass. By this means, the harmony is made full, without going beyond the limits of the voices: the tenor is only elevated two or three notes above the strict limits to which it was formerly confined.

To avoid impoverishing the upper part by dividing it into two, Cherubini thought of writing in some of his masses choruses in three parts, composed only of the soprano, tenor, and bass, and has drawn the finest effects from this arrangement, in spite of its apparent poverty; but it requires all the skill of a master like him to surmount the difficulties of this kind of composition, and to produce such effects with means so limited.

Rossini and his imitators, moved by a desire of filling their harmonies, have taken another course in regard to choruses; it consists in writing them almost always for five or six parts, namely, two basses, two tenors, and two trebles. This apparent abundance, however, is no thing more than real

sterility; for the intermediate voices double every moment the same notes and the same movements. Such a method is applicable only in choruses, the harmony of which, without movement, is designated by the name of *harmonie plaquée* (plated harmony), and is in fact the same which is in use in this school. It attracts the multitude by its seeming fulness; but cultivated and delicate ears are continually disturbed by its imperfections.

(To be continued.)

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